

## Lesson 3.2: Off to a Good Start

**Background (Read before you teach):** Across cultures, breakfast habits vary widely. For this lesson, breakfast is defined as foods and/or beverages from at least one food group, consumed within 2-3 hours of waking after the longest period of sleep (O'Neil et al., 2014). A breakfast that includes 3 or more food groups is more likely to meet nutrient needs. Among Mexican-origin families, some cultural foods to encourage for breakfast are beans, salsa, and corn tortillas which provide protein, fiber, folate, zinc, magnesium, iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C.

Eating breakfast has many benefits for children (O'Neil et al., 2014; Hoyland, Dye, & Lawton, 2009; de la Hunty, Gibson, & Ashwell, 2013). Consuming breakfast may reduce behavior problems and improve their performance in school, especially on tasks that require memory and attention (Hoyland et al., 2009). Skipping breakfast is associated with being overweight (de la Hunty et al., 2013). More research is needed to see whether regularly eating a healthy breakfast can prevent children from becoming overweight.

Having evening and morning routines can help children arrive in time for the school breakfast program. Rather than trying to force children who are not hungry to eat breakfast, parents can help by setting bedtimes and limiting late night snacking.

**Teaching Tips:** This lesson reinforces messages from other lessons, especially MyPlate, Healthy Routines, Sleeping is Free.

**Target Audience:** Mexican-origin families with young children, ages 3 to 8 years

**Key Message:** Eating breakfast can lead to better health and performance in school.

**Objectives:** By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Identify the benefit of eating breakfast;
- List several quick, healthy, breakfast ideas; and
- Plan a routine that allows time for breakfast.

**Materials:** MyPlate poster, poster paper, markers, white board, foam ball (optional), food and other supplies for food demonstration (Suggested Honey Granola)

**Handouts:** recipes

**Set-up:** Prepare granola before class. When cool, store in a plastic container or jar.

**Opening (Anchor):** (10 min) Welcome! Review what was covered last time and ask if participants have made changes, based on their goals. Congratulate and encourage them to keep on making changes.

Today, we will be talking about the benefits of eating a healthy breakfast

To begin the class, choose one of the following:

- **Ask:** Tell me about a time when you had trouble staying alert in school or at work because you hadn't eaten anything before for breakfast? How did that feel? Or
- Start with an active game. In a circle, randomly toss a foam ball to participants and ask them to call out quickly foods to eat for breakfast. Rule: try not to repeat any item twice. **Ask:** Was it hard to remember what everyone else said? Is it even harder to remember when you are hungry?

**Lesson (Add):** (15 min) Discuss the following points:

- **Ask:** Why is eating breakfast important, especially for children? Summarize and add to participants' responses:
  - Eating breakfast helps children perform better in school, especially with tasks that require attention and memory.
  - Children who eat breakfast often have healthier diets overall. A breakfast of three MyPlate food groups, such as whole grain instant cereal, fruit and milk provides fiber, calcium, vitamin D, potassium, iron, and B-vitamins. These nutrients are important for kids: *calcium and vitamin D* for strong bones, healthy teeth; *iron* for preventing anemia (which has negative effects on learning); *fiber* for relieving constipation; *potassium* for normal blood pressure and *B-vitamins* for using energy. To choose ready-to-eat (instant) cereals that are lower in added sugar, remember to check the Nutrition Facts label. Cereals allowed by the WIC program tend to be lower in added sugar than other non-WIC cereals.
  - Children who skip breakfast are more likely to be overweight, compared to those who eat breakfast. Possibly, breakfast skippers get hungrier and eat more unhealthy foods later in the day. Maybe, breakfast skippers go to bed later (snack late at night) and are less physically active during the day.
- **Ask:** What is a healthy breakfast like? Review MyPlate food groups, using the poster. Draw a large empty plate on the white board. Most children will probably not eat all five food groups for breakfast but a healthy breakfast includes at least 1 group but preferably 3 or more food groups. Try to include a whole grain--what are some examples? (oatmeal, whole wheat toast, corn tortilla). If the game was played at the beginning, recall some items called out in the game and show how they fit on the plate. Example: cereal, milk, & banana (3 groups); taco with tortillas, beans, salsa and cheese (4 groups); yogurt, granola and fruit (3 groups).

**Activity (Apply):** (25 min)

- **Ask:** What makes it hard for families to eat breakfast? Make a list on a large sheet of paper or white board. Answers may include: difficult to get up early, children not hungry, children don't like school breakfast menu.
- In pairs or small groups, have participants discuss solutions to one of the breakfast barriers. On a sheet of poster paper, ask them to write out a routine or plan of what can be done the night before to help breakfast happen. Think about ways for children and youth in the household to help, especially during school vacations. Invite participants to share their plans. **Ask:** Which of these ideas do you like? Which would work in your household?
- Food demonstration, tasting and sharing. Pass around the containers, showing the participants any foods that might be new or unfamiliar (for example, low-fat products, whole grain alternatives). Explain step-by-step how the food is prepared. Serve samples for tasting. **Ask:** What are some ways that your children can help prepare this recipe? How can you use it at home? What do you like about the recipe? What would you change?

**Closing (Away):** (10 min) Pair-up and set specific goals

What did you learn? Why is this information important to you? Choose a goal to work on this month (or week). Try to choose a simple goal that is doable within a month (week). For example, "I will plan with my child what to have ready for breakfast the night before" or "I will set a morning routine that includes time for breakfast". Write your goal on the recipe handout. Ask a friend or family member to help support you in reaching your goal. Invite families to share their goals.

#### **References and Resources:**

- de la Hunty, A., Gibson, S., & Ashwell, M. (2013). Does Regular Breakfast Cereal Consumption Help Children and Adolescents Stay Slimmer? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Obesity Facts*, 6(1), 70-85.
- Hoyland, A., Dye, L., & Lawton, C. L. (2009). A systematic review of the effect of breakfast on the cognitive performance of children and adolescents. *Nutr Res Rev*, 22(2), 220-243. doi:10.1017/S0954422409990175
- O'Neil, C. E., Byrd-Bredbenner, C., Hayes, D., Jana, L., Klinger, S. E., & Stephenson-Martin, S. The Role of Breakfast in Health: Definition and Criteria for a Quality Breakfast. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 114(12), S8-S26. doi:10.1016/j.jand.2014.08.022

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